

smarter than most of my classmates. Whenever there was a good opportunity to leave campus, I would be one of the first guys gone to enjoy the time. A lot of the other guys would waste their time reading over the chapter assigned for tomorrow. Why do it now, since I could do it tomorrow or the day after tomorrow? I didn't need to waste a lot of valuable time reading textbooks. I could always catchup later. After all, I was really a smart kid.

Those guys who didn't even know how to have a good time went off to college, and there I was wasting a perfectly good Friday mopping my instructor's office. Actually, what I was doing had less to do with mopping and more to do with leaning on the mop, while I contemplated the injustice of it all. That was when my instructor entered the office without knocking first and when I began to think that maybe I wasn't such a smart kid after all.

I would describe what he said, but I doubt that the written word would be able to express the volume properly. Also, I'm not too sure how to spell all of it. Suffice it to say that he got his meaning across pretty well. I figure that I might as well quit right then and there, just as I had at my other jobs. Why give him the satisfaction of firing me? Before I got the chance, he grabbed the mop out of my hand and began mopping the floor, even though he was the boss. In a minute he had finished the entire office, even though it was at least 15 square feet. The floor looked so good that I half expected Mr. Clean to be there looking up at us. I'm pretty sure that it had something to do with his putting more muscle into it than I put, especially since he told me that I had to put some muscle into it.

The floor reflected so well on him that I was really surprised when he purposely threw a lot of dirt on it. "Do you expect me to do your work for you? You came here to learn something." Then instead of telling me that I was fired, he told me in his own inimitable style to clean up the place NOW and that there was no excuse for not doing my best. He added that "all work is a self-portrait of the person who did it." Then he went to check on the rest of the students in the shop to spread more joy.

I was standing in an office that had a filthy floor, then had a beautiful and then

had a filthy floor again. What a waste. He didn't need to mess up such a good job. He could have left it looking great and I would have learned . . . very little. There aren't that many moments in your life when you feel as though everything has changed, at least there haven't been that many in my life. I had grown accustomed to starting some work, doing half of it, growing bored, getting in trouble, losing my job and walking away from responsibility. Losing and walking away from a job can get to be a habit. This time I couldn't even walk away from the job. Gateway's in the middle of nowhere, and the Center Standards Officer stops everyone who even tries to go AWOL.

This time I was stuck in a filthy office with a mop. It turns out that I was right. If you put a little muscle into it the mopping goes rather nicely. After I finished, it didn't look as good as it had when my instructor did it, but it did look better than it had before I started.

My instructor had said "all work is a self-portrait of the person who did it." Looking back over my life. I figured that it was time to stop eating crayons. I realized that there really isn't any excuse for not doing my best work. Losing had become a habit with me. I wanted to find out whether winning could get to be a habit as well.

I would like to discuss how I went on to becoming the best Building and Apartment Maintenance student that my instructor has ever had, but I would be lying. Not everything went great the moment I realized that I wanted to paint a pretty picture. What did change was that I didn't quit. Many months later, I successfully completed the Building and Apartment Maintenance program of the Home Builders Institute. For the rest of my life, I'm a completer.

As I was completing my trade, my boss told me how proud he was of me. His boss took the time during a business trip from Washington, D.C. to tell me how proud he was of me. Before Job Corps, I was the type of guy a boss wouldn't find, let alone compliment. Now they're recommending me for a Job Corps college program. I'm going to work hard to be a college "completer" too.

I have been accepted to the university of the State of New York. How has Job Corps changed my life? Before I came to Job Corps,

my self-portrait resembled the finger-printing of a slow kindergarten student. After I came to Job Corps it began to bear some likeness to a college man with a bright future. I would give you more of a critique, but I need to start reading NOW to get ready for college. I'm thinking about taking an elective in art history. I would like to learn about the work of Michelangelo, Da Vinci and my personal favorite, Norman Rockwell. I'm hopeful that if I work hard in school, maybe in a few years I'll be a smart man.

PROF. JOHN HALL SAVES
SMITHSONIAN ARTIFACTS

HON. NICK SMITH

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 16, 1996

Mr. SMITH of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, the country owes a debt of gratitude to one of my constituents, Prof. John Hall of Albion College in Albion, MI. His story has been told on the CBS Evening News as well as on the front pages of America's most prominent newspapers.

Professor Hall is an expert in, among other things, World War I fighter planes. He discovered that original pieces from a French World War I aircraft were for sale but which he knew to be the property of the Smithsonian. Inquiries led him to the seller—a Smithsonian curator, who even offered to authenticate the pieces he was selling on Smithsonian letterhead.

Professor Hall contacted the FBI. At their request, he wore a hidden microphone when discussing various aircraft parts that were available for sale with the curator. As a result, the FBI was able to arrest him. Thanks to professor Hall's detective work, the Smithsonian is now undergoing an inventory to see what else might have been stolen and implementing a bar code system to ensure that such theft becomes much less likely in the future.